2011-2013 Workshop on Health IT and Economics

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Organization: University of Maryland

Mechanism: PAR: HS09-257: AHRQ Grant Program for Large Conference Support (R13 and U13)

Grant Number: R13 HS 021022

Project Period: September 2011 – November 2013

AHRQ Funding Amount: $16,085

Summary: Health information technology (IT) research is being conducted in a variety of academic disciplines, including health services, medical informatics, computer science, public health, business, and economics. Each field brings unique insights into health IT research, yet rarely do these fields collaborate. The annual Workshop on Health IT and Economics (WHITE) promotes interdisciplinary collaboration and communication in health IT research by providing a forum for knowledge creation, sharing, and dissemination. In addition to bringing together academic researchers engaged in health IT research, the workshop includes health IT funders, policymakers, and practitioners to help promote dialogue between these stakeholders.

WHITE is held annually in the fall in Washington, D.C., and is hosted by the Center for Health Information and Decision Systems at the University of Maryland, College Park. The 2-day workshop is organized and led by a multi-disciplinary committee, including Principal Investigator Ritu Agarwal; and Program Chairs Professor Gordon Gao, Co-Director of the Center for Health Information and Decision Systems; and Professor Jeffrey McCullough, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota. It includes two keynote speakers, panel discussions, oral presentations, and poster presentations. A board of advisors, including members from both the research community (academic advisors) and the practice community (industry advisors), serves as a source of information and recommendations for health IT-related research issues. The board also advises the workshop organizers on program focus areas. Additionally, a program committee composed of approximately 40 researchers from more than 30 academic research institutions assists with reviewing paper and poster submissions for presentation at the workshop.

Each year, WHITE is evaluated by administering a satisfaction survey to participants at the end of the workshop.

Specific Aims:

- Build the foundation for a multidisciplinary health IT research community by gathering researchers from medical informatics, computer science, public health, business, and economics. **(Achieved)**

- Provide a forum for leading researchers to disseminate cutting-edge findings and knowledge. **(Achieved)**

- Afford policymakers and practitioners the opportunity to shape the evolving health IT research agenda. **(Achieved)**

- Develop the next generation of health IT researchers. **(Ongoing)**

2012 Activities: The third annual WHITE was held October 5-6, 2012, at the Washington Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C. The Academy Health and Optimal Solutions Group co-sponsored the workshop. About 100 participants representing many organizations attended. The workshop featured keynote speakers, panelists, and presenters consisting of policymakers, researchers, and practitioners from Government agencies such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. Participating research institutes included Johns Hopkins University, Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Maryland, IBM Research, and the Optimal Solutions Group. A variety of disciplines were represented at the workshop, and discussion topics included health IT impact on cost, quality, and efficiency; innovations in health care organization and delivery; and meaningful use.

Surveys were sent to all workshop participants to collect feedback on their satisfaction with WHITE 2012. Although the response rate was low, those who responded indicated high overall satisfaction with the workshop, venue, quality of the research presentations, and keynote speeches. Attendees also expressed many positive sentiments at the concluding session of the workshop.

Planning is underway for the 2013 workshop, which will be held November 15-16, 2013, in Washington, D.C.

Preliminary Impact and Findings: Thus far, WHITE has been successful in building an interdisciplinary community for health IT researchers and facilitating interaction and collaboration among academia, government, and industry. WHITE has also promoted the work of junior health IT researchers by providing an opportunity to present their work to their peers across disciplines via short presentations during the workshop.

Target Population: General

Strategic Goal: Develop and disseminate health IT evidence and evidence-based tools to improve health care decisionmaking through the use of integrated data and knowledge management.

Business Goal: Synthesis and Dissemination